

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (cancelled)
2. (cancelled)
3. (previously amended) A backpack as claimed in claim 29, wherein one of said at least one air channel is positioned to face the spine of a wearer when in use, and is sufficiently deep so as to avoid contact with the spine of said wearer when in use.
4. (cancelled)
5. (cancelled)
6. (cancelled)
7. (cancelled)
8. (cancelled)
9. (cancelled)
10. (cancelled)

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (currently amended) A backpack, comprising:

a backpack body, said backpack body having a back-facing face, said backpack body defining at least one storage compartment having a bottom, a closure member and a top that is openable by the closure member, wherein a bottom board is positioned at said bottom, wherein said bottom board is at least semi-rigid, wherein said bottom board is angled upwards in a direction away from said back-facing face, wherein said backpack is configured to maintain said bottom board generally in said direction when said backpack contains a load therein; and

at least one shoulder strap connected to said backpack body, wherein said at least one shoulder strap is adapted for mounting said backpack on a wearer,

wherein said backpack body has an away-facing face generally opposed to said back-facing face, and the backpack further comprises at least one cinch strap connected to said backpack body and extending across the closure member, the cinch strap includes a separation clip that is separable whereby unobstructed access is provided to the storage compartment that is openable by the closure member when the separation clip is separated ~~for cinching said away-facing face and said back-facing face towards each other.~~

18. (original) A backpack as claimed in claim 17, further comprising a back board positioned on said back-facing face, wherein said back board is at least semi-rigid.

19. (original) A backpack as claimed in claim 17, further comprising a plurality of cushions positioned on said back-facing face, wherein said plurality of cushions are positioned on all regions of said back-facing face that contact the back of said wearer when in use.

20. (cancelled)

21. (cancelled)

22. (currently amended) A backpack, comprising:

a backpack body, said backpack body having a back-facing face, said backpack body defining at least one storage compartment having a bottom, wherein a bottom board is positioned at said bottom, wherein said bottom board is at least semi-rigid, wherein said bottom board is angled upwards in a direction away from said back-facing face, wherein said backpack is configured to maintain said bottom board generally in said direction when said backpack contains a load therein, wherein said backpack body has an away-facing face generally opposed to said back-facing face and wherein the backpack body has a top;

at least one shoulder strap connected to said backpack body, wherein said at least one shoulder strap is adapted for mounting said backpack on a wearer;

at least one shoulder strap cinch strap, wherein the at least one shoulder strap cinch strap has a first end that is on the away-facing face of the backpack body and a second end that is on the at least one shoulder strap and is spaced from the back-facing face, and wherein the at least one shoulder strap cinch strap is adjustable in length and extends over the top. ~~to bring the back-facing face into close proximity with the wearer.~~

23. (previously amended) A backpack as claimed in claim 22, further comprising a back board positioned on said back-facing face, wherein said back board is at least semi-rigid.

24. (currently amended) A backpack as claimed in claim 22, ~~wherein the backpack body has a top, and~~ wherein the first end of the at least one shoulder strap cinch strap is at the top of the backpack body and wherein, in use, the at least one shoulder strap cinch strap joins to the at least one shoulder strap proximate where the at least one shoulder strap contacts the top of at least one shoulder of a user.

25. (cancelled)

26. (currently amended) A backpack as claimed in claim 22 ~~claim 24~~, wherein the backpack body has a zipper thereon, wherein the at least one shoulder strap cinch strap passes over the zipper, and wherein the shoulder strap cinch strap includes a separation clip that is separable to permit the shoulder strap cinch strap to separate into two portions.

27. (currently amended) A backpack as claimed in claim 22, wherein ~~said backpack body has an away facing face generally opposed to said back-facing face, and the backpack further comprises~~ at least one cinch strap is connected to said backpack body for cinching said away-facing face and said back-facing face towards each other.

28. (previously amended) A backpack as claimed in claim 27, wherein the at least one side cinch strap extends downwards in a direction from said back-facing face towards said away-facing face.

29. (previously amended) A backpack as claimed in claim 22, said backpack body having a back-facing face, said back-facing face having at least one air channel defined thereon, wherein said at least one air channel has at least one opening at the periphery of said back-facing face.

30. (new) A backpack, comprising:

a backpack body having a top, a bottom, a back-facing face and an away-facing face defined by at least a back-facing panel and an away-facing panel, said backpack body defining at least one storage compartment;

a closure member reversibly closing an opening in the top;

at least one shoulder strap connected to said backpack body, wherein said at least one shoulder strap is adapted for mounting said backpack on a wearer;

at least one shoulder strap cinch strap, wherein the at least one shoulder strap cinch strap has a first end that is on the backpack body and a second end that is on the at least one shoulder strap and extends over the closure member, and wherein the at least one shoulder strap cinch strap comprises a quick release mechanism.

31. (new) A backpack as claimed in claim 30, further comprising a back board positioned on said back-facing face, wherein said back board is at least semi-rigid.

32. (new) A backpack as claimed in claim 30, further comprising a plurality of cushions positioned on said back-facing face, wherein said plurality of cushions are positioned on all regions of said back-facing face that contact the back of said wearer when in use.

33. (new) A backpack as claimed in 30, wherein a bottom board is positioned at said bottom, wherein said bottom board is angled upwards in a direction away from said back-facing face.

34. (new) A backpack as claimed in claim 33, further comprising at least one side cinch strap connected to the backpack body for cinching said back-facing face and said away-facing face towards each other.

35. (new) A backpack as claimed in claim 34, wherein said side strap extends downwards in a direction from said back-facing face towards said away-facing face.

36. (new) A backpack as claimed in 30, wherein the at least one shoulder strap
cinch strap is adjustable in length,